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ABSTRACT

This issue of "Forum for Reading" contains four essays of interest to reading instructors at two-year colleges. Joan Gregg, Beth Pacheco, and Serena Nanda discuss the benefits for students of providing thematic unity in reading courses. The essay considers the selection of a theme, such as rebellion, identity, or family, that will lend itself to readings in a broad spectrum of academic disciplines and literary genres. In addition, the importance of asking the right questions to lead class discussions is emphasized. Next, Shirley A. Biggs examines the pitfalls of using grade-level reading scores, oral reading fluency, or testing techniques designed for children in the assessment of adult reading ability. Donald A. McAndrew then outlines the development of a survey instrument to be used in assessing to what extent students enjoy and value studying, are willing to study, and are confident of their study skills. The scale, which assesses students' attitudes toward taking notes, scheduling time, reading textbooks, and taking tests, is presented. Finally, Kent Smith points to the implications for two-year college educators of Paul Cooperman's book, "The Literacy Hoax," which documents the deterioration of the basic academic skills of American public school students. A joint statement by 11 educational organizations on the "Essentials of Education" is also presented. (JP)

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Editorial Note

The Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the International Reading Association promises to be exciting for our Special Interest Group. College Reading Improvement meets May 6, 1:00 to 3:45 p.m. at the Convention Center in rooms 120 and 121. Hope to see you there.

Clayton Pinette

Reading Questionnaire

Barbara Smith of the Department of Reading at American International College is presently surveying reading and study skills programs at the college level. In conjunction with this, we are circulating the following questionnaire. She would very much appreciate any information you may be willing to share. Please send your completed questionnaire to:

Barbara A. Smith, Ed.D.
American International College
Education Department
Springfield, MA 01109

* *

Name_____

Title_____ School_____

1. In which of the following areas does your program offer assistance?

   Developmental Reading ☐ Math ☐

   General Study Skills ☐ Writing ☐

   Remedial Reading ☐ Content Area ☐

   Other_____

2. What text(s) or materials do you use?_____

3. What format does the program follow?_____

_____

_____

4. What types of schedules are provided?_____

_____

_____

5. Does program carry credit hours?_____

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. Is attendance voluntary ☐ required ☐ ?

7. How do you determine who must (or should) attend?_____

_____

8. Are seminars offered on a need basis for incoming students?_____

_____

9. Are labs offered as a service (without credit) to students who want help?_____

_____

10. Approximately how many students does your program service per semester?_____

_____

Remarks:_____

Thematic Unity and Question Design In College Reading Courses

Joan Gregg, Beth Pacheco, and Serena Nanda
New York City Community College

About a decade ago, American universities began opening their doors to increasing numbers of educationally underprepared students. The goals were and ought to be the same for remedial as for traditional college students: to achieve a measure of academic and vocational success, and to prepare for roles as thoughtful and constructive citizens in a democratic society. Fundamental to the realization of these goals is the ability to read critically, particularly in social science areas, where the content is often complex, abstract and ambiguous.[1]

THEMATIC UNITY

Ordinarily, in reading courses, students are asked to apply critical reading skills to a welter of unrelated, abridged, illogically sequenced materials. In this conventional approach, internalization of the critical reading skills is delayed and diminished. Students are not given the opportunity to build up a body of knowledge in any one area; therefore, they can bring little information or informed opinion to a discussion of their texts. Their lack of prior knowledge defuses interest and decreases motivation; it diffuses focus between reading skills and content, and it inhibits recycling of vocabulary. As A.N. Whitehead states, in "The Aims of Education," "The results of teaching small parts of a large number of subjects is the

passive reception of disconnected ideas, not illumination with any spark of vitality."[2]

Thematic unity, that is, selecting a theme for a number of weeks or the term which will lend itself to readings in a broad spectrum of academic disciplines and genres, imposes meaningful organization on the content of a reading course. Key social science concepts such as rebellion, identity, community, autonomy, family and work are excellent bases for a unified reading course. Because various types of material will comprise such a reading course, students will learn techniques for approaching textbooks, journalistic and professional articles, essays and literary pieces.

In a thematically unified reading course designed by the writers for community college students, the concept of autonomy was explored. Reading selections for the term included Margaret Mead's "Dealing with the Aged," which examines autonomy among older Americans,[3] Phillip Meyers' "If Hitler Asked You to Electrocute a Stranger, Would You? Probably," which describes a laboratory experiment in measuring obedience, and Bernard Malamud's short story, "A Summer's Reading," a portrayal of a young man's intellectual and social maturation. These same reading selections could also be incorporated into different themes. Mead's article, for instance, could be included under the theme of generational relationships, to be complemented with such readings as O'Henry's short story "The Last Leaf" and Simone de Beauvoir's Introduction to Coming of Age. Thematic units, furthermore, need not be limited to concepts from social science; the biological sciences, technologies and the humanities may also be sources of themes.

Students in a thematically integrated course gain a solid foundation in a thoughtfully selected area. Since they do not have to deal with totally new content at each meeting, they are free to concentrate on assimilating and applying the target reading skill. Additionally, thematic unity provides students with an opportunity, all too infrequent in their past education, to work a problem through, modifying their opinions as their awareness of the complexity of the issue grows through reading and analysis. Finally, the thematically unified course, by integrating and reinforcing both content and skills instruction, makes it possible to measure progress in the two areas in a variety of ways. Evaluation may include the following activities. cloze test of specific reading comprehension based on previously read passages; cloze test of general comprehension based on thematically related passages; completion test again based on original passage but with larger groups of key features deleted; essays in response to questions approximating those in content courses; assignments which provide thematically related questions for interpretation and comparison to the viewpoints expressed in the original article.

The thematically unified approach is most successful when the theme chosen is the instructor's personal choice based on a careful examination of his/her values, interests, experiences and education. Harold Laski has noted in "The Obligations of a Teacher," that "...the book that excites the teacher is a natural source of illumination for the student."[4] Over a number of years, as instructors explore a variety of themes, they will have built up a resource of thematically organized materials which they will be able to present to their classes. Ultimately

then, they will be able to offer their classes the opportunity to choose from among a number of themes, all of which relate to the goal of higher education: preparation for roles as contributive citizens in a pluralistic, democratic society.

QUESTION DESIGN

It has been found that of vital importance are the kinds of questions teachers ask. These questions appear to determine the kinds of comprehension and critical reading skills students achieve.[5] In the first reading of the selection, the instructor must determine which words to gloss, which to assign to students for definition from context/word analysis, dictionary entry, and which words are key concepts requiring extended class discussion.

It is helpful for instructors to outline and annotate their texts in order to design questions which provide a frame for the context of the article and which will elicit sustained text based responses in the "paraphrased" or "transformed paraphrased" modes. The differentiation of various response types is discussed by Collin Harrison and Terry Dolan in "Reading Comprehension -- A Psychological Viewpoint."[6]

The nature and organization of the selection should be reflected in the types of questions/tasks assigned. They should require the student to apply such reading skills as identifying the author's thesis, recognizing main and supportive ideas in paragraphs, and collating information from text to support their responses.

"In our questions lie our principles of analysis and our answers may express whatever

those principals are likely to yield."[7] Properly formulated questions release students potential to perform a variety of tasks. Regarding the key social science concept of autonomy, for example, the student may be asked to respond effectively to such questions as 1) compare the possibilities of autonomy for males and females, or the old and the young 2) discuss the author's point of view on the possibilities for autonomy in non-Western cultures 3) justify your idea that the United States offers equal opportunities for autonomy for different segments of its population 4) interpret the Declaration of Independence for what it says about autonomy 5) narrate/describe an incident in which you feel you acted autonomously 6) explain how it might be possible to say that although life in modern societies offers a great deal of choice, it may allow for very little autonomy.

In responding to well formulated questions, the student becomes a critical reader, grasping crucial concepts and distinctions which would escape him if he were limited to questions which elicit merely verbatim or transformed verbatim responses.

CONCLUSION

Reading is a constant engagement of author's and reader's ideas. It occurs on many levels and requires of college students more than the mere acquisition of literal information. The thematically unified course incorporating questions which are not dead ends but starting points for continuing exploration and discovery, takes students beyond the minimum competency goal of remedial instruction. It helps them assert an ever increasing degree of control

over a complex, challenging and ambiguous environment.

Footnotes

1. Anselmo, Thomas & Weber, Ellen, "Yes, ... but ...," New York City Community College, research in progress.

2. Models For Thinking And Writing, Ed. Warren Taylor. World Publishing Co. (1966), 320.

3. This article served as the text for the writers' workshop presentation, "The 50 Minute Word: Applying Reading Skills to Social Science Concepts," International Reading Association, Twenty Fourth Annual Convention, April 1979.

4. Laski, Harold, "The Obligations of a Teacher," Models for Thinking and Writing, ed. Warren Taylor. World Publishing Co. (1966), 105.

5. Smith, Helen K., "Critical Reading," Reading for All. Newark Del. International Reading Association, Inc. (1972), 170.

6. Dolan, Terry & Harrison, Collin, "Reading Comprehension -- A Psychological Viewpoint," Reading in a Second Language, ed. MacKay, Barkman and Jordan, Newberry House Publishers (1979).

7. Langor, Susanne, Philosophy in a New Key, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. (1978), 4.

Adult Reading Skill: Is It Underestimated?

Shirley A. Biggs
University of Pittsburgh

Determining how well students function as readers is the task of all teachers of adults whether they are engaged in teaching in a basic skills, technical training or a college level setting. Knowledge of students' ability to extract and use information from written materials can serve as a guide for deciding the appropriate nature and scope of assistance to be given to students as they read course related materials. The aim of this paper is to point out some pitfalls in assessing the adult student's reading skill.

Is the adult student's reading skill underestimated? It may be if the estimate is based on 1) grade level reading scores earned on standardized tests, 2) expectations of behavior more appropriate for younger, less experienced readers and/or 3) rigid standards of accuracy and fluency of oral reading.

Grade Level Score Problems

The interpretation of grade level scores can be a critical factor in estimating reading skill. It is critical because if the score is viewed as the level at which the reader functions (at which written materials can be read, understood, and used for expanding knowledge), then student reading skill can be underestimated.

The problem of misinterpretation grows out of the manner in which grade level scores are derived and the comparability between the adult

reader and the child reader on which the test is likely to be normed. Grade level scores are determined by calculating the average number of correct responses earned by readers placed in a particular grade in school. It is assumed that the readers on which the average is computed will have had similar school and related educational experiences (Brown, 1970). Yet realistically, when adults earn grade level scores on tests, the assumption of similarity with younger readers may not be warranted. Adult experiences differ significantly from those of children. Yet grade level norms or standards are based on children's performance. A problem of grade level score interpretation exists even among children in a typical school setting. Glaser (1964) compared subjects scoring within the fifth grade range (5.0 to 5.9) on the Gates Reading Survey. Interestingly, subjects scoring in this range were third graders and seventh graders. Though these students earned similar grade level scores, their scores represented dissimilar developmental stages and experiences and most likely dissimilar reading competence.

Even readers earning identical raw scores on a specific test are likely to represent varying reading strengths and weaknesses. Each reader makes his own peculiar pattern of correct and incorrect responses. These unique patterns of responses reflect each reader's ability, but only insofar as the items on the test are sensitive enough to tap that ability. Unlike the pattern of responses which may suggest areas of knowledge or competence, the grade level score represents only a comparison of a total number of correct or incorrect responses among students.

Reading has frequently been defined as bringing meaning to, as well as getting meaning

from the printed page. Acceptance of that definition suggests acceptance of the notion that the older reader brings much more experience to the printed page and is therefore likely to benefit similarly by extracting and using the information represented by the writing. This strength brought to the reading activity by adults is the skill that the grade level test score does not reflect. Test items often tap a narrow range of competencies. The question of whether or not the adult reader earning a 5.5 score on a reading achievement or survey test functions like a fifth grader earning the same score must be answered in the negative.

Experience and Developmental Level

With proportionately less guidance available for assessing the reading competence for adults than for children, the temptation has been to borrow assessment techniques uncritically. One of the consequences of the borrowing has been failure to recognize the real experiential and developmental differences between child and adult learners. As suggested above, comparisons between child and adult reveal distinct differences. Having lived longer, adults have accumulated more experiences than children. In addition, adult experiences are likely to be more varied because of increased access to a world beyond the home and family. Long-term exposure to life allows the adult to store, organize and reorganize these experiences into a complex set of knowledge, attitudes and interests.

As the adult develops or matures his perception and expression of his experiences changes. While a young learner he perceived and expressed his experiences in sight, sound

and touch or concrete terms. As an older learner his expressions become increasingly abstract. This was demonstrated in a summary of vocabulary development studies reported by Farr (1969, p. 39) who concluded that "younger students tend to choose more concrete definitions (descriptions and use) while older students chose more abstract definitions (synonyms and classifications)."

These experiential and developmental differences represent strengths that can be used to the adult student's advantage (Zahn, 1967). They suggest a level of readiness to learn not found in the younger learner. Because his level of readiness varies from topic to topic, it is necessary to assess the level as learning activities change. Encouraging students to share their prior experiences related to the lesson at hand offers insight to the level of readiness. This sharing of experiences reduces the chances of underestimating competence.

Oral Reading Fluency

The adult reader is particularly sensitive about his oral reading performance. He believes, as often does his audience, that his entire range of reading skills is reflected in his oral performance. Each time he utters a word or phrase that fails to match the text, it is assumed that the mismatch represents not only inability to pronounce the words accurately but also inability to understand the meaning the words represent. Yet evidence is available that suggests that the absence of fluent accurate oral reading does not necessarily reflect a lack of understanding of materials read (Biggs, 1977; Goodman, 1969; Pehrsson, 1974). It appears that a variety of factors may influence oral reading performance.

Among these factors are word identification skill, capacity to comprehend, degree of familiarity with concepts in the text, the reader's own language patterns and the reader's level of anxiety at the time of the reading (Guszak, 1978). Indeed, any single factor or a combination of factors may result in non-fluent reading.

Despite the discomfort of both reader and listener to less than accurate oral reading, careful observation and analysis show that the very "errors" readers make provide evidence of reading strength as well as weakness. Such analysis uncovers a greater degree of reading skill than the naive or casual observer might expect (Biggs, 1977, Goodman, 1969). Biggs' (1977) work with college freshman readers established that analysis of the subjects' oral reading reveals a rich array of productive reading strategies.

In summary, there is little need here to establish a case for suspecting that an adult has reading problems if he consistently earns low standardized test scores, shows little or no evidence of content-related readiness and reads in an inaccurate and non-fluent manner. These factors can and sometimes do represent serious reading difficulties. However, the most effective instructor will focus primarily on uncovering the reading strengths and will not be misled by observations resulting from 1) misinterpretation of grade level test scores, 2) rejection of relevant adult experiences, 3) ignorance of adult-level developmental stages of readiness and 4) misinterpretation of oral reading behavior.

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Using an Attitude Toward Studying Scale in Developmental Skills Courses

Donald A. McAndrew
Trocaire College

Background

Students are assigned to my Developmental Skills course because their placement testing indicates that they have less than college survival level skills in reading, writing, and studying. Generally, my students are aware of their deficiencies. Their previous school experiences have clarified the image of themselves as "below grade-level readers." Most of these students don't know how to study. Nevertheless, they come to my first class reluctantly, knowing that they have been judged as able to do little and that that little is usually judged as done poorly. Thus, the class climate is generally one of reluctance--many times one of outright hostility. Here they are in college, and they still cannot escape the specter of previous judgments. It looks like the same old thing here too.

In all my courses, therefore, I am concerned with developing a positive attitude toward studying and the subject matter. I realize that to give students a more positive attitude toward reading, writing and studying may be precisely what they need to succeed academically. With this in mind, I focus my attention on studying since this involves both reading and writing and since, in conversations, most instructors indicated that this was an area where Developmental Skills students always seemed to lack sufficient ability.

To judge whether or not I have been successful in fostering a positive attitude toward their own study skills, I use an "Attitude Toward Studying" scale which I have designed myself; I administer the scale early and late in the semester. Following is an explanation of how I constructed and use my "Attitude Toward Studying" scale.

Attitude Toward Studying

As I see it, a student's attitude has two components: 1) a behavior and 2) a feeling toward that behavior. Therefore, I use a two-way behavior-feeling matrix to guide me in constructing the items on the attitude scale.

Since study skills as a content area has been outlined in detail by many people over the years, it was relatively easy to isolate five major skills to be developed in the study skills strand of my course. These major skills are the ones that are shared by most authors of study skills texts, and they can be listed as follows:

1. reading textbooks
2. taking class notes
3. marking textbooks/notes
4. taking tests
5. scheduling time

I use these five as the behavior components of the behavior-feeling matrix.

The feeling components of the matrix are not as easily isolated. I decided to look at four specific feelings about the skills listed above. In statement form they are:

1. The student should enjoy studying.

2. The student should value studying.
3. The student should be willing to study.
4. The student should be confident in his/her ability to study.

Enjoy, value, be willing, be confident. Certainly these are important feelings in any course, but, in study skills, they seem absolutely essential to the repeated practice of the behaviors needed to attain the desired level of competency. The good student is the one who knows how to perform the behaviors and feels the desire to do so.

I then devised the specific items on the attitude scale, setting up a matrix similar to the one below and then writing an item for each cell on the matrix.

	BEHAVIOR / FEELING	Reading Texts	Taking Class Notes	Marking Texts/Notes	Taking Tests	Scheduling Time
F	Enjoy	11	1	3	5	9
E	Value	2	6	10	17	12
L	Be Willing	19	15	13	8	18
I	Be Confident	7	14	16	20	4
N						
G						

The numbers refer to the individual items on the attitude scale. For example, the attitude surveyed in item 11 on the scale could be expressed

as the statement, "The student enjoys reading texts," while the attitude surveyed in item 13 could be expressed as "The student is willing to mark his/her texts or notes." The actual "Attitude Toward Studying" scale developed from the matrix appears below.

Attitude Toward Studying

By circling the appropriate number below you can indicate your feelings about different aspects of studying. Read each statement and then circle the number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with the statement. The numbers have the following values:

5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	uncertain	disagree	strongly disagree

1.	I like to take notes in class.	5 4 3 2 1
2.	I think that it is important to read the course's textbook.	5 4 3 2 1
3.	I enjoy marking off important parts in my textbook and notes.	5 4 3 2 1
4.	I'm really good at scheduling my study time.	5 4 3 2 1
5.	I hate taking tests in my courses.	5 4 3 2 1
6.	Taking notes in class is a waste of time.	5 4 3 2 1
7.	I'm really good at reading textbooks.	5 4 3 2 1

8. I don't want any tests in my courses. 5 4 3 2 1

9. I hate having to schedule my day to fit study time in. 5 4 3 2 1

10. Marking off the important parts of a textbook or notebook is a waste of time. 5 4 3 2 1

11. I like to read my textbooks. 5 4 3 2 1

12. It's important to schedule time for study in the day's plan. 5 4 3 2 1

13. I always want to mark off the important parts of my textbook and notes. 5 4 3 2 1

14. I'm really terrible at taking notes in class. 5 4 3 2 1

15. I want to take the best class notes I can. 5 4 3 2 1

16. I'm not very good at marking off the important parts of a textbook or notebook. 5 4 3 2 1

17. Taking a test in class is really useless. 5 4 3 2 1

18. I'm not willing to schedule my study time into my day. 5 4 3 2 1

19. I never want to read my textbook. 5 4 3 2 1

20. I'm really good at studying for tests. 5 4 3 2 1

Additionally, the behavior-feeling matrix provides a method of detailed scoring and record keeping for each student. For scoring the attitude scale, I used the modified matrix below which I dittoed on 5 X 7 cards for easy storage in a file box.

NAME_____ SECTION_____ SCORE____

	Reading Texts	Taking Class Notes	Marking Texts/Notes	Taking Tests	Scheduling Time	TOTAL FEELINGS
Enjoy	11/+	1/+	3/+	5/-	9/-	/13
Value	2/+	6/-	10/-	17/-	12/+	/7
Be Willing	19/-	15/+	13/+	8/-	18/-	/7
Be Confident	7/+	14/-	16/-	20/+	4/+	/13
	/14	/8	/8	/2	/8	

TOTAL BEHAVIORS

The student's score on each item of the scale is recorded in the cell with the appropriate item number; for example, the score on item 11 is recorded in the uppermost left box. Each of these scores represents a specific feeling about a specific study skills behavior. These specific data should be useful in characterizing

a whole class or other large groups.

Once the scores are entered, several total scores are quickly calculated using the indicated + and - while totaling. The plus and minus signs refer to whether the item was stated positively or negatively on the scale. Obviously a high score on a negative item cannot be considered equal to a high score on a positive item; the plus/minus easily accounts for this. These totals are done both across and down. The across totals yield total feelings for studying; for example, the first across total represents how much the student enjoys studying in general. The highest possible score is listed after the slash. The down totals represent the student's general feelings toward each of the specific behaviors; for example, the first down total represents the student's general feelings about his/her textbooks. Both the across total, total feelings, the down total, and total behaviors, should be useful in characterizing groups and individuals. The overall total, the actual score on the attitude scale, is the grand total of either the across or down totals since each of these includes all the items. This score is the major score to be considered in measuring change in attitude during the semester.

This behavior-feeling matrix method of constructing an attitude scale allows for a unified, well-defined instrument. It provides a means of carefully structuring surveys of attitude to assure that all desired attitudes are surveyed and to delimit the specific dimensions to which these attitudes are surveyed. Also, the validity and reliability of the scale can be established in a precise and efficient manner since the behaviors and feelings of the matrix are derived directly from the study skills

objectives of the course. Finally, and hopefully, the careful construction of the instrument will lend credence to the claim that the study skills strand of my Developmental Skills course is having demonstrably positive effects on students' attitude toward studying.

Does The Literacy Hoax Have Anything to Say to Us?

Kent Smith
Bangor Community College

Despite the fact that it focuses mainly on the elementary and secondary public schools, my nomination for the most compelling educational book to come along during the last few years is Paul Copperman's The Literacy Hoax, published in 1978 by William Morrow and Company. Perhaps some of you have read this controversial book, or maybe you have seen its dynamic, young author on such television shows as Donahue. If so, you know that Copperman unequivocally maintains that the basic academic skills of American public school students have been deteriorating to a deplorable state for over a decade. His contention is based upon a comprehensive examination of what appears to be all available information and extensive interviews with educators and students from across the nation.

If you haven't read The Literacy Hoax, I recommend that you do so even though I can anticipate such possible objections as (A) you've already heard that old refrain about the poor basic skills of today's students, or (B) you're in the business so no one has to tell you about the state of today's students' academic abilities, or (C) you're aware that respected educators have angrily challenged Copperman's findings and recommendations, so why bother reading a book that may contain material of questionable validity? or (D) since the book's focus is primarily upon the elementary and secondary levels, it is unlikely that the book contains information of particular interest or relevance to you, a college teacher.

Despite the possibilities of such objections, I believe there are legitimate reasons why we college basic skills teachers should be acquainted with The Literacy Hoax. Included among the most cogent of these reasons are:

(1) It points out that students may be crippled intellectually for life if we teachers allow ourselves to be detracted from our major responsibility to them, which is to help them improve their basic academic skills.

(2) It points out that we owe students not an education, but an access to an education; we must help our students understand that achieving an education requires a sustained, disciplined effort.

(3) It points out that many students fail in compensatory programs not because they are hopeless academically, but because they are subjected to limited, chaotic, haphazard instruction; conversely, it points out that many students succeed in compensatory programs, not because they are promising academically, but because they are subjected to plentiful, stable, orderly instruction.

(4) It points out that teachers who compromise their instructional standards out of concern for their students' self-esteems risk damaging them far more seriously if these students are sent away unable to cope in either school or society.

So I believe that The Literacy Hoax, even if its primary focus is on the elementary and secondary schools, has something to say to us college basic skills teachers; if you haven't read this controversial, hard-hitting book, do so and see if you don't agree with me.

Educational Organizations Issue Statement on "Essentials of Education"

"In an era dominated by cries for going back to the basics, for minimal competencies and for survival skills, society should reject simplistic solutions and declare a commitment to the essentials of education." This is the recent conclusion reached by 11 educational associations representing more than 400,000 members of the school community.

A joint statement entitled The Essentials of Education takes the position that a definition of the essentials of education should avoid three easy tendencies: to limit the essentials to the three R's in a society that is highly technological and complex; to define the essentials by what is tested at a time when tests are severely limited in what they can measure: and to reduce the essentials to a few skills when it is obvious that people use a combination of skills, knowledge, and feelings to come to terms with their world."

"Educators should resist pressures to concentrate solely upon easy-to-teach, easy-to-test bits of knowledge, and must go beyond short-term objectives of training for jobs or producing citizens who can perform routine tasks but cannot apply their knowledge or skills, cannot reason about their society, and cannot make informed judgments," the statement contends.

The 11 educational organizations believe that the ultimate goal of education should be "to develop informed, thinking citizens capable of participating in both domestic and world affairs." Emphasis on the basic skills alone

cannot accomplish this goal.

"The interdependence of skills and content is the central concept of the essentials of education. Skills and abilities do not grow in isolation from content," the organizations believe. "Determining the essentials of education is a continuing process, far more demanding and significant than listing isolated skills assumed to be basic.

The organizations call on educators, legislators, school boards, parents and others with an interest in education to specify the essentials of education more fully. "All must now participate in a coordinated effort on behalf of society to confront this task. Everyone has a stake in the essentials of education."

At a time when the question of what should be taught in classrooms across the country is being debated among educators and the public alike, it is an important step for leading educational associations to come to grips publicly with the issue of what is essential in the educational process.

Those associations contributing to the "Essentials of Education" statement include: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, International Reading Association, Music Educators National Conference, National Art Education Association, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Council for the Social Studies, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Science Teachers Association

and Speech Communication Association.

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For copies of the complete text of the "Essentials of Education" statement in brochure form, write: Public Information Office, International Reading Association 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19711, U.S.A.

Author Profiles

The tri-authors of our first article all teach in New York City; Joan Gregg and Beth Pacheco teach at New York City Community College and Serena Nanda teaches at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Joan, who has a Ph.D. in English literature is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Developmental Skills and Coordinator of the Developmental English program. Joan has taught in Pakistan, and among her hobbies are studying Chinese and oil painting. Beth, who is enrolled in the Ed.D. program at New York University, is also an Assistant Professor in the Department of Developmental Skills and coordinates the reading program. In her spare time, Beth enjoys collecting antiques. Serena is an Associate Professor of Anthropology. She has a Ph.D. in anthropology and lists photography among her hobbies.

Shirley Biggs, author of "Adult Reading Skill: Is It Underestimated?" is currently an Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. Shirley, who has a doctorate in education, has served as a reading consultant to numerous public school systems in Pennsylvania as well as speaker at many reading workshops and conferences.

The author of "Using an Attitude Toward Studying Scale in Developmental Skills Courses is Donald McAndrew, Director of Developmental Skills at Trocaire College in Buffalo, New York. Don is also enrolled in a doctorate program, concentrating on research and evaluation. In his spare time, he enjoys organic gardening and distance running.

Kent Smith, author of "Does The Literacy Hoax Have Anything to Say to Us?" is Co-editor of the Forum For Reading. Kent is an Associate Professor of Developmental Studies at Bangor Community College, Bangor, Maine, where he has taught basic reading and writing improvement courses since 1971. Kent, who has an Ed.D. in language arts from the University of Maine at Orono, is a native of Iowa and taught in Illinois for a number of years. He enjoys refinishing furniture and playing tennis.

- Announcements -

Attention Reading Lab Directors and Personnel:

As a service to the profession, I/CT (Instructional/Communications Technology, Inc.) will publish an International Directory of Reading Labs. The Directory will provide you with the names of your colleagues, kinds of lab configurations, and funding information which you might use to expand your program. Furthermore, this Directory will facilitate the sharing of (1) successful teaching and management techniques, and (2) solutions to common problems unique to the lab program.

I/CT plans to make an interim Directory available at the National IRA Convention in St. Louis, 1980, with final Directory available at the National IRA Convention in New Orleans, 1981. Therefore, please continue to send your requests for information regarding inclusion in the Directory. Final deadline for information receipt will be February 1, 1981.

If you and your school would like to be included in this new International Directory of Reading Labs, please send the name of your contact person to:

Instructional/Communications Technology, Inc.
10 Stepar Place
Huntington Station, New York, U.S.A. 11746

- Announcements -

Kirschner Associates and the School of Education, University of Missouri-Kansas City, have been awarded a contract, Adult Learning in Non-School Settings, by the National Institute of Education. The researchers would like to establish contact with others interested in or currently conducting research projects in adult learning. For further information, contact Dr. Mary Ella Brady, Kirschner Associates, 1100 17th Street, N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 862-9400.

FACT SHEET
INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION
THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

The Special Interest Group for Two-Year Colleges of the International Reading Association is a nationwide group of educators from two- and four-year colleges who have the four-fold purposes of:

1. Exchanging ideas and techniques with regard to corrective, remedial, and developmental reading and study skills programs indigenous to two- and four- year colleges in the areas of methods, diagnosis of student reading problems, and evaluations of the effectiveness of the programs, textbooks, and teaching materials.

2. Proposing and encouraging the adoption of certain specific qualifications for the teachers of college reading and study programs.

3. Acting as a resource body to aid colleges in implementing or improving reading and study skills programs.

4. Sponsoring conferences and meetings planned to further the purposes of the SIG and the national IRA.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

A SIG member is entitled to the following benefits:

1. Publications

a. Forum for Reading, the journal of the SIG for Two-Year Colleges. It is published twice annually, in November and April, and includes articles focusing on the teaching of reading in colleges.

b. SIG News Notes, the newsletter that informs the national SIG membership of SIG happenings on the regional and national levels.

c. Innovative Learning Alternatives in the Community College, a "members first" publication of practical reading strategies that have been successfully field-tested by its contributors, who are usually members of the SIG.

2. Eligibility for attendance and participation at regional SIG conferences and the business meeting at the national IRA convention.

3. Opportunities for professional growth includ:

a. Possible publication of research or theoretically-based articles in the Forum for Reading, and the sharing of workable teaching techniques in Innovation Learning Alternatives in the Community College.

b. Possible presentation at both regional and/or national IRA conferences.

c. A chance to contribute significantly to the advancement of the reading profession by holding an office or editorial position in the regional or national IRA organization.

4. Occasions for making varied professional contacts.

5. Planned social activities during the national and/or regional IRA conferences with others interested in college reading.

MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues for SIG for Two-Year Colleges are $6.00, and should be forwarded to:

Mrs. Twalah Jackson, Treasurer
Tarrant County Junior College District
Northeast Campus
828 Harwood Road
Hurst, Texas 76053

All members of SIG must also be members in the IRA.

NAME _____

POSITION _____

SCHOOL _____

ADDRESS _____

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To join or to renew your SIG membership complete the following application:

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP/TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

Please remit $6.00 membership dues/$3.00 for student to:

Twalah Jackson
2848 Stephanie Lane
Hurst, Texas 76053

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